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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) methodology used in the California school system to teach academic content to intermediate, threshold level limited-English-proficient (LEP) students and to counteract the limitations of sheltered content programs. SDAIE teaches grade-level subject matter in English and is specifically designed for speakers of other languages. It consists of a rigorous academic core at the student's grade level. Clients for SDAIE have intermediate proficiencies in English and cognitive skills in their primary language. SDAIE is based on Vygotsky's fundamental notion that learning is social in nature, thus, it must involve collaborative and cooperative learning as well as scaffolding. Expressive writing is used in the SDAIE method to encourage students to make connections with content through journal entries, quick writes, and graphic organizer entries. The role of the primary language is strategic as primary language literacy is a link to the rigorous content instruction. SDAIE teachers have expertise in language development and in the academic content area as well as providing opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning. (Contains 29 references.) (NAV)

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Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English

DeAnne Sobul

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SPECIALLY DESIGNED ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH

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Definition

Sheltered instruction has been the term used to describe content area instruction for limited English proficient students. The goal of sheltered instruction was to assure limited English proficient students access to the core curriculum. The term was coined by Steve Krashen (1983) to describe the methods used to teach limited English proficient students enrolled in content classes in the ABC Unified School District, Los Angeles County, California. *Sheltered instruction* was viewed as the bridge between primary language and English only instruction in content area classrooms. As originally conceived by Krashen, sheltered instruction is content area instruction in English for intermediate or threshold level limited English proficient students. It is designed as a transitional program in the content area not as a replacement for primary language instruction. As originally conceived sheltered instruction is basically similar to specially designed academic instruction in English.

Unfortunately, Krashen's concept has been diluted. Sheltered content classes now enroll newcomers and scores of LEP students who have minimal proficiencies in their primary languages as well as in English. Sheltered classes in many districts have replaced primary language classes. Such sheltered classes do not, nor can they, provide access to the core curriculum since students do not have the proficiencies essential for cognitive academic success in an English only curriculum. Sheltered classes have become submersion content classes where students with limited English proficiencies either "sink or swim." Such sheltered classes deny LEP students access to the core curriculum. The content is in fact "watered down." In reality, such sheltered classes can best be described as content based ESL for LEP students who are at the preproduction, early production, speech emergent levels of English language development.

Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) is the term now used to describe academic content instruction designed for intermediate, threshold level (speaking, listening, reading and writing) LEP students in California. SDAIE is **grade-level subject matter in English specifically designed for speakers of other languages**. It is **rigorous** academic core content required **at the student's grade**

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level; it is not watered down curriculum. *SDAIE provides LEP students access to the core curriculum taught in English at a level equal to that of English only students..*

Student Characteristics

Intermediate level proficiencies are best defined by the natural approach. Intermediate level students have basic interpersonal communication skills in English; and they can understand and operate in a classroom staffed with a monolingual teacher who provides comprehensible input. Such students have passive vocabularies of approximately 12000 English words; their academic skills in English vary and are dependent upon their prior experience and cognitive proficiencies in their primary languages. The most appropriately placed SDAIE students have primary language cognitive academic language proficiencies as well as intermediate level second language proficiencies. Such students can follow directions and can work productively in collaborative groups in English. They can comprehend with rigorous, serious content in English which is delivered in a manner sensitive to the linguistic needs and learning styles of LEP students. The term SDAIE preserves the intent of instruction which assures access to a *rigorous academic curriculum in core subjects.*

SDAIE is crucial to the success of LEP students to assure their access to the core curriculum. This is especially important at the secondary level; SDAIE has credibility among teachers of academic course work since it is **rigorous** instruction. The differences between SDAIE and mainstream classes focus on the methodologies used, teacher preparation, and the development of bilingual proficiencies.

Collier and Thomas in their ongoing research show that LEP secondary students must have at least two years of schooling their primary language/s and five to seven years of schooling in English language development to compete with their English only peers. In addition, those limited English proficient students with no primary language schooling need up to ten years to acquire enough English to be competitive in an academic setting. Thus, LEP students' primary language cognitive development is an important indicator of students potential for academic success.

SDAIE Methodologies

Collaborative/Cooperative Learning Groups

Crucial to SDAIE instructional methodologies is Vygotsky's fundamental notion that learning is social in nature. An expert (or more knowledgeable peer) is needed initially to guide the learner's conceptual development; then gradually the two begin to share

problem solving functions, with the learner taking the initiative and the expert correcting and guiding when the novice falters. Finally the expert acts only in a supportive role. Vygotsky suggests that there are boundaries between a students' actual development and his/her potential development to work independently. It is in this "zone of proximal development" that the student needs the assistance of an expert; the relationship is similar to that of an apprenticeship. SDAIE is, in a sense, the "zone of proximal development" for LEP students in a rigorous content situation. The LEP student needs assistance from an expert (teacher or more knowledgeable peer) to continue his/her English language development and acquisition of the core curriculum until the student develops English language proficiencies to the extent needed to learn independently in the second language.

Collaborative/cooperative learning is the most powerful practice teachers can use with language minority students. A collaborative classroom is student centered; it is characterized by heterogeneously grouped students working together to discover and solve problems. The teacher provides guidance and coaching; s/he is not a dispenser of information. Researchers in the filed (Kagan, Johnson & Johnson and Sharan, Slavin) report that cooperative learning results in dramatic academic gains for all students.

Collaborative/cooperative structured classrooms simulate real world problem solving. Kagan's research reports that cooperative classrooms promote prosocial skills and prepare students for an increasingly interdependent workplace. When students share responsibility for learning among themselves and with the teacher, higher level cognitive academic language development results.

Collaborative/cooperative learning and Scaffolding

Scaffolding as guided participation in joint activities that help students assimilate new ideas (Bruner) is essential to students' construction of meaning. By providing learners opportunities to work collaboratively under expert guidance, they begin to assume more responsibility for their own learning. Working together in joint activities through collaborative learning, encourages students to make connections between ideas presented in class and their prior knowledge. By engaging in collaborative tasks, students actively construct meaning. Scaffolding takes students from their actual development and moves them toward independent learning by providing opportunities for guided participation.

Construction of meaning results from the interaction and negotiation that occurs in small heterogeneous groups; such an environment is essential in the SDAIE classroom. Heterogeneous groups promote optimum learning because group members with diverse prior experiences broaden the knowledge base that the group uses for problem solving. In this way, small group instruction promotes cognitive development and critical thinking. Individuals faced with conflicting viewpoints attempt to clarify, analyze, synthesize, speculate and evaluate as they work toward solutions. Small

heterogeneous groups provide opportunities for rich interactions since students' backgrounds provide substance for the consideration of varied and alternative viewpoints. It is the diversity of a group working together to solve problems that promotes intellectual development.

Collaborative learning also promotes negotiation of meaning (from varied experiences) and encourages students to explore their personal understanding of concepts without fear of being wrong. Such classrooms are anxiety free and promote the risk taking essential for language and cognitive development. Rather than listening to the teacher all of the time, students have regular times for collaborative talk, reading and writing as they construct meaning. The language is expressive; that is, the learner is encouraged to freely express thoughts, feelings, opinions about the content being studied. Expressive language is collaborative language; it provides opportunities for students to share ideas, develop thinking and explore tentative conclusions. Through expressive talk, learners become more at ease with ideas, concepts, thoughts, commitments toward a point of view. They learn to listen to others' views, and they learn to compromise. Within the collaborative group, expressive talk is cyclical, it provides and promotes feedback. The supportive nature of the collaborative group also offers opportunities for growth through honest criticism of ideas and points of view. Such collaborative enterprise offers an enriched opportunity for intellectual development. It also promotes the concepts and ideas of what it means to be an American: respect for an individual's right to participate freely and to be heard.

Expressive writing

Similarly, expressive writing is a tool for learning. Expressive writing offers opportunities for LEP students to freely express their thoughts, ideas, opinions about a subject. In this way students clarify their thinking. Expressive writing is used in the SDAIE classroom to encourage students to make connections with content through journal entries, quick writes and graphic organizer entries. The strategies of clarifying, expanding and qualifying ideas inherent to expressive talk occur with expressive writing whenever the students' work is shared with teacher or peers. Not all expressive writing needs to move toward revision, editing and composition. Expressive writing like expressive talk encourages collaborative construction of meaning.

Teacher's Role

The SDAIE teacher has expertise in language development and in the academic content area. Additionally, the teacher's role in the SDAIE classroom differs from that of a teacher in a transmission oriented classroom. The SDAIE teacher is a facilitator of learning; the teacher is the essential expert in a classroom typified by social interaction and the construction of meaning. The teacher provides opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning.

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Typically, the SDAIE teacher moves among the small groups of students rather than being front and center transmitting information. In a real sense, teacher as facilitator is a more difficult role since it requires greater organization and management skills. It also requires a commitment to the belief that students must actively participate in their personal construction of meaning; students are not passive receptacles for another person's ideas and opinions. Thus, the role of teacher as facilitator advances the concept of what it means to be an American: the SDAIE teacher actively promotes students' intellectual development by posing questions and designing lessons that encourage students personal construction of meaning. SDAIE students are limited English proficient; they must be provided every opportunity to develop those intellectual proficiencies essential to participation in a democracy.

The implementation strategies modeled by the instructor are designed to encourage the **teacher as facilitator** model. Teachers must be schooled in strategies for the step by step organization of a SDAIE classroom devoted to active student construction of meaning. Procedures needed to make collaborative groups work, to provide lessons which promote students' development of language and cognitive skills, to use media and technology, to promote diversity as a resource, and to use authentic and alternative assessments must be part of teacher professional development.

The model for professional development must not prescriptive since teachers will need to modify the suggestions, processes and procedures according to the needs of students. However, the basic tenants of collaborative learning, the use of expressive talk and writing, and the use of language as a tool for learning are fundamental to SDAIE.

[California has embarked on an ambitious professional development training program which requires teachers of limited English proficient students to have 45 to 90 hours of professional development in English language development and SDAIE; the number of hours are dependent on previous experience and training. Most preservice training and teacher credential programs in California have changed to meet the standards adopted by the Commission Teacher Credentials for the Bilingual/Crosscultural Language Academic Development credential(s).]

SDAIE strategies may be grouped into categories which include: teacher language load, contextualization, interaction and literacy development. See figures 1, 2 and 3. The SDAIE checklist (figure 2) was developed to use as a self check or in a coaching situation involving two or more teachers. It is suggested that teachers may wish to form collaborative coaching teams and use the checklist to assist one another in the development of those strategies appropriate for SDAIE instruction.

The Role of Primary Language

The role of primary language is strategic to SDAIE instructional programs. Primary language literacy is the most important link to rigorous content instruction; the more

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literacy students have in their primary languages, the more they will benefit from SDAIE instruction. Primary language cognitive skills provide the foundation essential to building the prior experience students need to fully function in a second language content classroom based on accessing rigorous core curriculum.

The development of literacy skills in the first language is key to developing second language literacy. Whenever possible primary language content instruction must be provided. Students who have primary language literacy will achieve greater success, more quickly than those students who have limited literacy in their primary languages. When access to the core instructional program is not possible through direct primary language instruction, other resources can be used to provide as much core access as possible. These include both human and materials resources:

Human resources:

- bilingual instructional staff
- community language schools and other community agencies
- volunteer speakers of target languages
- peer and cross-age tutors
- teacher teams in other grades/schools
- college student tutors

Material resources

- CD ROM
- video
- telecommunications links
- directions for accessing software in Spanish
- bibliographic information which includes primary language texts, trade books, and reference books; audio and video tapes

Content Based ESL

Newcomers, students with limited proficiencies in their primary languages and in English, and students who arrive with little formal schooling are unable to benefit from the SDAIE classroom. These students are at the pre-production, early production or speech emergent level of English language. Content based ESL offers a way such students can access the core curriculum at a level that is comprehensible. A content based curriculum for English language development utilizes interesting content themes until LEP students acquire cognitive skills to be able to benefit from SDAIE.

The focus of content based ESL is the development of active student communication using the context of integrated themes from academic content areas. This approach to English language developments reflects much of Krashen's concept of comprehensible input. Language acquisition occurs through the use of interesting contexts drawn from social science, science, language arts delivered at a level a little beyond the student's proficiency. The focus in content based ESL is English language development rather

than academic content. Strategies include total physical response, language experience approach, the use of realia and visuals, manipulatives, demonstrations, graphic organizers; pre-reading and pre-writing activities. The goal is to promote students development of communicative competencies in listening, speaking, reading and wiring as well as to introduce students to concepts, vocabulary and skills relevant to content areas. Content based ESL provides LEP students opportunities to develop the prior knowledge needed to move into the rigorous academic content of the SDAIE classroom.

Conclusion:

The goal of Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English is to provide access to a rigorous core curriculum for limited English proficient students. Students who are clients for SDAIE have intermediate proficiencies in English and have cognitive skills in their primary languages. One difficulty in providing SDAIE content instruction is the fact that many limited English proficient students enter upper elementary and secondary schools in the United States with limited prior schooling. Content based ESL instructional programs provide a way for LEP students with limited prior schooling to acquire knowledge and experience related to academic content essential to school success. However, it is essential to distinguish between rigorous academic content instruction that prepares students for access to higher levels of education and hence greater economic opportunities (SDAIE) and content instruction that is used primarily to teach English language development (see figure 3).

This article is not intended as criticism of sheltered content programs generally since many maintain rigorous academic standards. California developed the term SDAIE to draw a distinction between programs that provide rigorous academic curriculum and those which do not.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF SDAIE

Figure 1

CHARACTERISTICS	METHODS
Collaborative learning	Small group activities are essential for the construction of meaning and building prior knowledge
Contextualization of content	Scaffolding of all instruction.
Interaction	Interaction: student-to-student, student-to-teacher, teacher-student, student-to-text, and student -to-self (reflection and self evaluation)
Assessing prior knowledge and experience	Using heterogeneous teams, graphic organizers, technology
Scaffolding	Use of collaborative teams, graphic organizers, manipulative, artifacts, projects, and the development of meta-cognitive skills
Multicultural awareness and the validation of diversity	Use of collaborative heterogeneous teams, materials and resources representative of diverse populations; Primary language support and themes representative of the cultural backgrounds of students.
Thematic instruction	Use of thematic and integrated units of instruction in all subject areas.
Teacher decisions and delivery focused on providing comprehensible input (related to contextualization of content and concepts).	Selection and planning of instruction including content, concepts, and materials

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SPECIALLY DESIGNED ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION STRATEGIES CHECKLIST

Figure 2

Subject:
Concept:
Concept related to core curriculum: Y [ ] N [ ]

TEACHER SPEECH	never	seldom	often	frequently	INTERACTIONS TALLY
Awareness of language/concept load					TEACHER INITIATED:
Clear pronunciation					Comprehension checks: Examples:
Comprehensible sentence structure					Clarification requests: Examples:
Restatements, examples, synonyms					"WH" questions:
Repetitions					Other referential questions: Examples:
Other:					
CONTEXTUALIZATION	never	seldom	often	frequently	**Student Initiated**
Focus on message, meaning					Comprehension checks: Examples:
Use of visuals					Clarification checks: Examples:
Use of artifacts, manipulatives					"WH" questions: Examples:
Use of audio clues					Other referential questions:
Use of body language					Examples:

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT:	Y	N	Examples:
Lesson accesses prior knowledge			
Integration of basic skills			
Use of L1 support			
Lesson moves from whole to part			
Lesson is learner centered			
Evidence of student empowerment			

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CONTENT BASED ESL &
SPECIALLY DESIGNED ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH
Figure 3

	CONTENT BASED ESL	SDAIE
1. OBJECTIVE	L2 communicative competence (listening, speaking, reading, writing)	Access grade level rigorous academic curricula
2. STUDENTS	All levels limited English proficient students	Optimum: limited English proficient students with L1 literacy and L2 intermediate proficiency
3. TEACHER	Certification: 1) ELD theory; 2) ELD methods; 3) culture and cultural diversity	Certification: 1) subject area credential; 2) ELD theory; 3) culture and cultural diversity
4. CONTENT	Transaction model to promote interaction with the unknown, construction of meaning and thinking process within a framework of second language instruction which can best be accomplished using grade relevant thematic units drawn from the California FRAMEWORKS.	Academic subject matter using transaction model to promote interaction with the unknown, construction of meaning and thinking processes. Grade level academic subject mater based on conceptual big ideas drawn from appropriate academic FRAMEWORK.
5. ROLE OF L1	Supportive; usually need paraprofessional assistance.	Supportive
6. METHODS	Transactional: student centered; whole to part, concept based, problem solving, active learning, scaffolding techniques including contextualization, graphic organizers, schema building; metacognitive awareness, CALLA. recycling of content; refined teacher delivery.	Transactional: student centered; whole to part, concept based, problem solving, active learning, scaffolding techniques including contextualization, graphic organizers, schema building; metacognitive awareness, CALLA. recycling of content; refined teacher delivery (not to be confused with "watering down" of concepts or content).
7. MATERIALS	Print rich environment; ESL using whole language approach, e.g. integration of skills and thematic units drawn from a variety of subject areas. Technology and media as appropriate.	Subject matter texts used with methods listed above. Interactive technology and media as appropriate.
8. ASSESSMENT	Student success in communicative competencies using a variety of alternative methods.	Student success in subject matter using a variety of alternative methods.

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